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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0251
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0064
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002504

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EAP, G/TIP, EAP/MTS, NEA/I, IM/ISO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ID](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: STATUS OF INDONESIAN WORKERS REPORTEDLY IN IRAQ

REF: A) JAKARTA 2022 B) BAGHDAD - JAKARTA - WASHDC
8/31/07 EMAILS AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Joseph L. Novak, Counselor for Political Affairs, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d).

[11](#). (U) This is an Action Request. Please see paragraph 10.

[12](#). (SBU) Summary. Laboff met with the Department of Foreign Affairs' Director of Overseas Indonesian Workers Protection September 7, who gave us the names of 72 Indonesians reportedly working in Iraq, asking for consular access and that they be permitted to go home. Laboff conveyed that the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad had searched for these workers for several weeks but could not locate them, asking for more detailed information. Meanwhile, an Indonesian news reporter said he contacted some of the workers directly by cell phone and e-mail, reporting September 10 that they are working safely in the Green Zone and free to return home. End Summary.

By the Numbers

[13](#). (C) Laboff met with the Director of Overseas Indonesian Workers Protection Teguh Wardoyo September 7 to discuss trafficking and migrant worker issues. Teguh presented Laboff with a list of 72 Indonesians believed to be working in Iraq. (Note: The Foreign Ministry confirmed that the other 12 Indonesians referred to in ref A have already returned to Indonesia. We will forward via e-mail to Washington and Baghdad the names of the remaining 72 persons believed to still be in Iraq.) Besides names, the only detail the Foreign Ministry provided was that they are staying in "Villas 2, 3 and Trailer in Villa 3." Laboff conveyed to Teguh the message in Ref B that, based on the 12 names that the Foreign Ministry had provided us a month ago, U.S. Embassy Baghdad made a concerted effort to find the Indonesians at Camp Victory and other facilities but could not locate them, and that we needed more details to help us in the search.

[14](#). (C) Shabda Thian, Teguh's deputy, confided to us September 10 that the remaining 72 workers reportedly in Iraq have told unofficial sources directly in contact with them that they are fine and do not want to be in contact with the Foreign Ministry. Shabda nevertheless asked our assistance to confirm their welfare, particularly since Indonesian law does not allow workers to be sent to hazardous areas.

First Priority is to Locate Workers

15. (SBU) Since the GOI now has the names of 14 workers from this same group who apparently have returned home and the name and address of the Indonesian employment agent that sent the workers, Laboff asked Teguh to talk to these sources to get more information. He agreed, and invited Laboff to talk with the returned workers when they have been located. Teguh asked Laboff for consular access and for the workers to be allowed to come home to visit their families. Laboff stressed that the GOI certainly could have consular access and that the workers would be free to come home if they want, but that first we have to locate them. Teguh acknowledged that allegations that the workers are being forced to stay in Iraq were all from one worker, Steven Latu, who had sent complaint letters to the GOI.

16. (SBU) Teguh spoke with the media following his meeting with Laboff, saying that the Foreign Ministry had summoned Ambassador Hume on this issue, and had met with his representative (Laboff). Indonesian media reported September 7 that Teguh said U.S. officials at first denied that Indonesian workers were being kept beyond their work contracts but once presented with the facts, had agreed to help. Teguh told us that the workers were sent to Iraq by a Jakarta company, North Sea Java Group, on January 2, 2006, on contracts promising USD3,000 a month and two weeks vacation a year, but have not been allowed to leave the camp since then. Teguh told the media at the regular Friday afternoon press briefing, "This is probably because the U.S. military authorities are dependent on our workers and afraid they won't come back." (Note: Laboff asked Teguh on September 7 to contact the media to correct these inaccurate public statements, which he did the same day, and Jakarta Post on September 10 quoted Teguh as sayi

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ng that Ambassador Hume had not been summoned and that the U.S. Embassy was trying to solve the problem).

Media Does What Foreign Ministry Cannot

17. (SBU) Meanwhile, Jakarta's media did its own digging over the weekend. Jakarta Post reporter Abdul Khalik reached two of the workers in Iraq by cell phone and e-mail, and reported on September 10 that the workers are all safe and satisfied with their work in Iraq. Wasis Pudjiono, an electrical inspector, said he took a vacation last October and that seven workers have left on vacation during the past two days, the Post reported. Another construction worker, Alexander Kipuw, told Khalik, "We are not under any threat. They also treat us well. We eat together with Americans, and even sleep in better places than them," the Post reported. Khalik told laboff that the workers said they are free to leave Iraq but feel safe there, some moreso than in Indonesia. Khalik told laboff the Indonesians said they are working on construction of the U.S. Embassy. Khalik provided the following contact information for Pudjiono: wasispudjiono@yahoo.com.

18. (SBU) Indonesian-language Koran Tempo newspaper reported September 10 that, according to the Association of Businesses for Placement of Indonesian Workers, several disreputable Jordanian employment agencies are working with disreputable Indonesian employment agents to send Indonesian workers with false documents to Iraq via Jordan, Bahrain and Syria. Teguh said police are investigating the employment agency that supplied the 72 Indonesians.

Separate Migrant Case in Iraq

19. (SBU) In a separate case, Teguh informed laboff about an Indonesian maid, Elly Anita, working in Mosul, Kurdistan, who has contacted her family by text message saying that she is not being allowed to leave her employer, who also is holding her salary. Teguh said the Indonesian agency which sent her, Nashwan Labor Supply, has already been banned and is operating illegally. Anita's employer is reportedly a

couple, Shmal Abdul Wafa and Asnah. According to the consular report on the case which Teguh shared with Laboff, Anita's cell phone number is 971508724474, but when they tried to call a Philippine maid, Elena, answered the phone. This case was also reported in the Indonesian media.

¶10. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Mission would appreciate any information about the reported presence of these Indonesian workers that we can share with the GOI.

HUME